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SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. JACK REED

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 25, 1996

Mr. REED. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 3604, the Safe Drinking Water Act amendments. This bill includes an important provision: H.R. 3280, the Water Quality Right-To-Know Act of 1996, of which I am a cosponsor. I am pleased that the House will pass this bipartisan piece of legislation, which will continue to protect our Nation's drinking water. While I remain concerned about the last-minute inclusion of projects which threaten to diminish the State revolving fund [SRF], overall I believe this is a good bill. It is my hope that this issue will be resolved in the House-Senate conference.

This bill takes many important steps to improve the Safe Drinking Water Act. It authorizes the SRF, which is essential to our communities in providing safe drinking water; it gives the EPA more flexibility in issuing regulations; it requires that standards be set for arsenic and radon; and it requires the EPA to conduct studies on sulfates.

One of the most important provisions would require water systems to public information annually on the status of drinking water and notify consumers of any contaminants. While the United States has one of the safest drinking water supplies in the world, there have, unfortunately, been incidents of contamination. I have heard from many constituents who expressed support for this provision because Americans have a right to know what is in their drinking water. I agree with them, and that is why I am a cosponsor of this provision.

I commend my colleagues who kept negotiations on this bill open and involved all interested parties to produce a sound piece of legislation that will establish good public policy. It is a relief to support a commonsense, bipartisan bill that will ensure that Americans have clean, safe drinking water. This bill will allow our communities to meet the goals of the act cost effectively and responsibly without sacrificing the quality of our drinking water.

Mr. Speaker, again, I urge my colleagues to work in the House-Senate conference to ensure that funding for the SRF is not cut, and I look forward to passage of this important piece of legislation.

DISAPPROVAL OF MOST-FAVORED-NATION TREATMENT FOR CHINA

SPEECH OF

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 1996

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, a year ago I heard and heeded the arguments of those who claimed that by maintaining MFN we would have the leverage to force

change in China. In light of what has transpired over the last year, I find it difficult to reconcile the benefits of MFN with China, with China's refusal to obey international law regarding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and its continued abuses of human rights. My hopes for change as a result of engagement through MFN were dashed.

The record of China over the past year merits a strong and unequivocal message of protest from this body. On every issue that is central to United States-China relations we have witnessed a steady and serious deterioration over the past year. In the critical areas of human rights, weapons proliferation, trade, and military aggression we have seen retreat, not progress.

I fully recognize the benefits of trade with China, and have held out the hope that by maintaining that relationship we could achieve progress in these critical areas. Therefore, I supported renewal of MFN last year. My hopes proved elusive, however, and the price of our forbearance has been an escalation in the threats to the security of the United States, both economic and strategic. I cannot stand by and watch China engage in practices that threaten the security of our Nation. If we are going to create a more secure place for the United States in the future, we must take the right actions today which will ensure that goal tomorrow.

The greatest threat to the United States and world security is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In the hands of rogue nations, in the hands of nations that support terrorism, in the arsenals of nations with simmering disputes that stand the risk of erupting any day, chemical and nuclear weapons are a threat, not just to the United States but to the world.

In recent years, contrary to the promises made by the Chinese, China has increased both the quantity and the quality of its arms transfers. Not only has China transferred missile technology, but now China has transferred nuclear and chemical weapons technology to nonsafeguarded nations. Protests have produced promises, but what we have gotten in return for our indulgence and patience is continued defiance of international law. A record of broken promises is not strong enough to support renewal of MFN.

The human rights abuses of China are almost too numerous to mention. Time and time again, we have been promised that reforms would be enacted. But once again, there was not progress this year.

For these reasons, I cannot in good conscience support MFN renewal this year. I hope that in the future China reforms its practices, and demonstrates through meaningful, positive reforms its desire to join the international community. The door is open for a China that obeys treaties and respects the rule of law. There is no place for a China that behaves with the disrespect for international law which China has exhibited in the past year. There is a need to send a message to China when their behavior so endangers our national security. Therefore I will oppose MFN this year.

COST OF GOVERNMENT DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 9, 1996

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 193, a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the cost of Government spending and regulatory programs should be reduced so that American families will be able to keep more of what they earn.

July 3, 1996, is Cost of Government Day, the date when the average American has earned enough in gross income to pay off all direct and hidden taxes—total Federal, State, and local government spending, plus the cost of regulation. In other words, July 3 is the day when Americans stop working for Uncle Sam and start working for themselves and their families.

This year, the total bill comes to \$3.38 trillion—\$13,000 for every man, woman, and child in America.

Mr. Speaker, the people that I represent live in the 12th most taxed congressional district in the Nation, and the 2d most taxed State in the Union. The cost of government has become too expensive, too burdensome, and they need relief. When working Americans are forced to take two jobs, work longer hours away from their families, simply to make ends meet, something is wrong.

Congress created new programs in the past, often with the best of intentions, but failed to consider how its decisions affect the people who must pay the bills. When you add to the Federal tax burden the taxes paid at the State and local level, and consider the hidden costs—costs associated with compliance with Federal regulations and mandates—it becomes clear that the American people can no longer afford the huge government bureaucracy that has been created over the years.

I am proud to say that this Congress recognizes the fiscal pressures facing working Americans today, and is working to ease the burdensome cost of government. We passed a balanced budget plan to stop the runaway spending that threatens our future and the future of our children and grandchildren; we've passed regulatory relief legislation to restore a degree of common sense to the manner in which Government regulations are drafted and carried out; we've passed legislation to give working Americans a modest degree of tax relief, and we have even attempted to roll back the tax increase that President Clinton pushed through Congress in 1993.

Unfortunately, the President has fought us at every turn. We owe it to working Americans to keep trying, Mr. Speaker, and enact policies that will allow them to keep more of what they earn. The cost of government is simply too high. We can do something about it, and I urge my colleagues to join me today in supporting this important resolution, and join me in working for a leaner—and better—government.